



# Job Opportunity Director of Park and Planning

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
(Equal Opportunity Employer)
6611 Kenilworth Avenue
Riverdale, MD 20737
(301) 454-1411

#### Director of Park and Planning

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a nationally known regional park and planning authority established by the state in 1927 to plan for the physical development of the bi-County area of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. This Commission is seeking for the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning a consummate leader to be responsible for thevaried functions of the department: acquiring, conserving, developing and maintaining the Commission's 29,000 acres of park land in Montgomery County and in planning for a maturing and diverse County of approximately 841,000 residents. The position will report directly to a full-time Chairman and four part-time board members. The successful candidate is responsible for the smooth integration of the 1,000-member parks and planning staff, which include a full range of professions and occupations, and must have the ability to cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies, special interest groups and citizens.

This is a non-merit, contractual position with a comprehensive benefit package. Salary commensurate with qualifications. Requirements include: MA/MS in Planning, Parks or related fields with significant experience at senior management levels. Excellent oral and written communication and negotiation skills essential. Knowledge of the political, geographic and social environment of Montgomery County, MD is highly desired. Use Website (www.mncppc.org) for Recruitment Profile or request one from following address and to send by October 30, 1998, resume and salary history: Park and Planning Director Search Committee, c/o HR Solutions, Inc., 6900 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 704, Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815. TEL:301/986-1487; FAX: 301/986-1021.

M-NCPPC is AA/EEO/M/F/D

#### RECRUITMENT PROFILE

#### FOR THE

#### DIRECTOR OF PARK AND PLANNING

#### MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

## THE MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

#### SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

This Recruitment Profile provides background information on Montgomery County, Maryland, and the Montgomery County Planning Board (MCPB) of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), and outlines qualifications and experience identified as desirable for the new position of Director of Park and Planning.

The Profile was developed from interviews with members of the Planning Board, key staff members, and relevant written materials. The specific criteria contained in the Profile will be used as a guide to screen and select individuals for Interviews and appointment consideration.

All inquiries relating to the recruitment and selection process for this position are to be directed to:

Park and Planning Director Search Committee

HR Solutions, Inc.

6900 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 704

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

TEL 301/986-1487

FAX 301/986-1021

### About the County, the Organization and the Challenge

Montgomery County, Maryland, (estimated population, 841,000; area, 505 square miles) is located in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. It has been a national leader in modernizing county government. While most government services have been merged directly under the county government, several

continue to be performed by quasi-independent organizations such as The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). This agency, created in 1927, also provides planning, parks and recreation services to Prince George's County, Maryland.

The Director of Park and Planning is a position, created in 1995, with direct responsibility to the Montgomery County Planning Board, which is a distinct operating unit within The M-NCPPC, composed of a Board of five Montgomery County members, including a full-time Chairman, all appointed by the Montgomery County Council with the approval of the County Executive for four-year overlapping terms. No more than three members can be from the same political party.

All services performed by the Board are on behalf of Montgomery County only. Its primary role is as the Montgomery County Council's principal adviser on acquiring, conserving, developing, and maintaining 29,000 acres of park land and land use and community planning.

Some of the Board's planning responsibilities are: 1) to prepare and amend the County's long term General Plan; 2) to prepare and amend sector Master Plans and functional plans; 3) to formulate subdivision regulations; 4) to prepare recommendations on Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance; 5) to implement the subdivision process by reviewing and approving all preliminary plans, site plans and other plans for development; 6) to give advice on the planning implications of capital facilities and programs of the County Government, Montgomery College, the school system, and the water and sewer commission; and 7) to approve the work program and annual operating budget of the planning function.

The Planning Board also has authority over 331 parks in the County totaling approximately 29 thousand acres including open space. Some of the park-related responsibilities of the Planning Board involve approving: 1) park operating policies; 2) park user fees; 3) the annual park work program and budget and Capital Improvements Program; 4) land acquisition contract and major parks development contracts; and 5) design for individual park facilities.

The Director of Park and Planning is expected to facilitate and implement all of the above Planning Board functions.

This requires experience in recommending and defending policies to a very knowledgeable, sophisticated and activist Planning Board, and the capability of representing them effectively before a knowledgeable and active citizenry, developers, attorneys, the County Council, County Executive and other governmental agency staff. The Director must be a professional in one of the related functions of the department, must understand the comprehensive mission of the department and be able to communicate clearly technical language and processes to relate successfully to many audiences with differing aspirations and objectives.

The Director is directly responsible to the Planning Board for leading and motivating a workforce of just under 1,000 employees. The Board desires a Director who can work comfortably with award-winning technical and professional staff within the context of producing fiscally prudent and community acceptable end products.

The Director is expected to work closely with a Central Administrative Services Division that provides financial, legal and personnel services to both the Montgomery County and Prince George's County sides of the Commission. This unit assists the Director with administering annual budget expenditures of \$67 million. Approximately 95% of the Board's income is derived from property taxes. User fees from predominantly self-supporting recreation and cultural activities comprise most of the remaining revenues.

Bonds are rated Triple-A by the major rating services. The Government Finance Officer Association has awarded the Commission excellent ratings for both its budget presentations and financial reporting.

The immediate agenda for the position offers an incomparable challenge and professional opportunity to a leader experienced in solidifying a diverse and de-centralized staff in a large, complex organization environment with multiple centers of power. The successful candidate must be a person experienced in true team building and accustomed to developing creative ways to accomplish objectives within limited resources. In effect, the Director of Park and Planning is expected to be a consummate leader.

A number of trends are slowly becoming apparent in Montgomery County that have significant implications for planning policy, and the position, for the next decade: 1) Montgomery County's employment pattens reflect slower job growth; 2) the ethnic composition of its residents is growing more diverse; 3) many of the County's communities and facilities are becoming more mature; 4) the growth of the County's resources have slowed since the 1980's; 5) the proliferation of, and competition from, employment and housing opportunities in the exurban areas.

Partly in response to these trends, the Board has identified four major goals for the new Director: 1) continue to fine-tune the Department's ability to implement seamlessly its various parks and planning responsibilities; 2) effectively move ahead through increased staff-involvement the community-oriented work to strengthen existing but ever-changing, dynamic communities by pro-actively involving the citizens living within a designated district; 3) highlight the Department's responsibility to protect the natural environment, conserve park land and open space in balance with enhancing the neighborhood environment and promoting social and economic values through innovative use of land use regulatory powers; 4) achieve greater economies through a variety of productivity improvements, alternative delivery systems and program reevaluations ever mindful of the taxpayers' burden.

The Planning Board is committed to moving forward with the department's organization, but is leaving further organizational strategic planning and implementation to the new Director. Sensitivity to employee morale is a top priority and cannot be underestimated. Neither can the intensity of the Board's desire to develop a generally more responsive organization to all its customers.

The new Director will find a broad range of housing accommodations available in the County, and a public school system considered among the best in the nation. It is an exciting and stimulating area to be part of with numerous cultural and recreational opportunities available.

#### Candidate Qualification Criteria

The following factors of education, experience, management style, and personal traits have been identified by Board members and staff as desirable attributes for the Director of Park and Planning to possess:

#### **Education and Experience**

- Possess a Master's Degree in planning, parks or related fields.
- Have a significant experience at senior management level in both planning and parks and commands respect from professional peers in both fields and proven experience in handling similar challenges now facing the Commission.
- Able to demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the Planning Board's unique political, cultural, social, etc. relationship with a County Executive type of government, but as professional staff, has

direct reporting relationship with the County Council.

- Must have excellent human relations skills and be a strong, but caring, leader who is able to handle
  conflicts and build consensus, and to implement and achieve goals and objectives in a political
  environment through a well-conceived vision that is clearly communicated to all concerned.
- Knows how to work with multiple supervisors, such as the five-member Planning Board, as opposed to an individual.
- Is experienced in holding primary responsibility for presenting budget recommendations and managing personnel policy in a large organization.
- Is experienced in developing and sensitively implementing strategies for organizational plans involving highly technical and professional employees from differing organizational cultures.

#### Management Style/Personal Qualities

- Is experienced in taking the initiative in providing leadership and vision in assisting a Board to
  identify, analyze and thoroughly deliberate and address public policy questions which are critical to
  meeting the needs of citizens, special interest groups, governmental and political agencies and
  businesses.
- Is adept at working with staff, a Board and citizens developing parks and plans that are acceptable to the community and are fiscally responsible.
- Is a "people person," with the ability to excite and motivate employees, and empathize with individuals and communities representing a broad variety of interests and sections of the County on a fair and equal basis; is a good listener.
- Is a risk-taker, willing to explore new ideas and ways of doing things with the concurrence of the Planning Board.
- Is experienced interacting comfortably with diverse populations, special interest groups, citizens and small business people as well as executives of large corporations and institutions.
- Is able to foster for staff an environment of risk-taking and creativity; is accustomed to delegating authority commensurate with responsibility, and following up on implementation.
- Does not micro-manage; accepts responsibility for staff performance and does not "pass the buck." Is able to identify the problem, not the person.
- Has successfully worked under pressure and under public criticism; thrives on pressure and learns from criticism; is not afraid to admit mistakes.
- Practices and insists on timely communications up and down and across the organization to develop an atmosphere of trust.
- Is experienced in assisting Boards in utilizing their talents and time in the best manner possible, and addressing individual and collective concerns; understands how to work closely and facilitate the work of the full-time Chairman to avoid conflict with administrative direction.
- Projects a strong "professional presence" in actions, personal demeanor and ethical standards that can inspire confidence and credibility throughout the County, among Board members, and staff.
- Sees staff, Planning Board, citizens, applicants and County Council alike as customers, and develops strategies with staff to better identify customer needs, improve service delivery and build good will.
- Practices hands-on management, visits countywide work sites, obtains feedback from employees
  and citizens, improves communications with public agencies at local and state levels, and "sells" the
  Board's programs to various audiences.
- Is able to strongly defend professional positions developed in the County's best interest despite pressure and criticism; is flexible enough, however, to know when other alternatives are needed and to assume leadership in developing solutions to produce win/win situations.
- Understands and respects the need to conserve park land, protect the natural environment and is

able to implement the programs required to assure that that protection will be enforced.

- Is politically astute, but does not engage in political behavior and actions that would be detrimental to the Commission.
- Is accustomed to working and attending meetings beyond regular business hours.



Quick Links to Other Pages

#### Home Page

Parks | Planning/Development | Your Safety | What's New? | Planning Board Meetings | What's Fun? | Facts & Figures |
Protecting Our Environment | Employment and Volunteer Opportunities | Publications | Important Links